

Meeting of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund Board



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Monday, 16 December 2024, 10.00
am

Committee Members present

Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Helen Crawford
Councillor Patsy Ellis
Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Philip Knowles (Chairman)
Councillor Bridget Ley
Councillor Virginia Moran (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Lee Steptoe

Officers

Emma Whittaker, Assistant Director of Planning
Nick Hibberd, Head of Economic Development and Inward Investment
Michael Dow, UKSPF Officer
Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer

43. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Nikki Manterfield and Councillor Sarah Trotter.

44. Disclosure of Interests

The Chairman and Councillor Helen Crawford declared an interest in the item on Bourne Town Council Christmas Lights and took no part in the decision on this item.

45. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2024 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED**.

46. Expenditure Profile

The Board were circulated with the Expenditure Profile which showed the committed spend by intervention to 5 December 2024.

47. Summary of Main Programme Applications

The Board briefly looked at each application before discussing the issue in more detail during the private session of the meeting.

SKMP42 – South Kesteven District Council – Brown Tourism Signs

The funding application was for the installation on two Brown Tourist Signs for Stamford along the A1 as currently there were no signs installed.

RF-1028 – Clematis Cottages (returning)

The funding application had been refused at the last meeting due to the high cost. A further application had been submitted for a lower funding amount for Phase 1 of the project for the see capital required to install all the additional infrastructure.

RF-1033 – E Badges Ltd

This funding request was for innovation of off-site manufacturing processes to upgrade the production of the badge machine casting from gravity die to high-pressure injection moulding. The investment required was for tooling.

RF-1034 Moto 101

The application for funding was for the purchase of a renewable power source.

SK-2218 – Stamford Indoor Bowls

The funding requested was for the installation of solar panels on the roof of the Indoor Bowls Club. It was noted that the building was leased from South Kesteven District Council.

SK-2193 – Rutland and Stamford Sound Community Interest Company

Funding was being requested to establish a DAB community radio service covering Rutland and Stamford. It was noted that the radio would be based in Rutland.

48. Exclusion of Press and Public

It was proposed, seconded and agreed that the press and public were excluded from the meeting at this point as it was likely that information contained within the remaining items on the agenda were exempt under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

49. Financial Update

The Board were circulated with an up to date report which showed the current financial position. The South Kesteven Prosperity Fund was part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) which was approved by Government in December 2022. South Kesteven District Council was awarded £3.9m in funding for projects to be delivered between 2023 and March 2025.

The paper gave a breakdown of funding during the years the fund had been in place. Currently the unallocated funding was £246,000 which did not take account of the applications before the Board for that meeting.

The Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) was a top-up to the UKSPF and succeeded the EU funding from LEADER and the Growth Programme which were part of the REPF. The REPF supported capital projects for small businesses and community infrastructure. South Kesteven had been awarded £540,460 of funding for projects to be delivered before the end of the programme in March 2025.

The tables within the paper gave a breakdown of funding split between funding that had been committed, uncommitted, paid to applicants, not yet paid to applicants for both the SKPF and the REPF.

A further table listed the applications before the Board for the meeting and if they were endorsed the funding remaining.

Also within the paper was a table which highlighted funding that had not yet been paid to applicants. The projects listed were being monitored closely by Officers to ensure they would be completed by the end of March 2025, some of the projects highlighted included those who had been given a substantial amount of funding.

Members discussed the applications which had been allocated funding but had yet to use the total funding allocated. Concern was expressed by some Members of the Board that there appeared to be a large amount of funding although allocated, was still to be committed and time was running out.

One Member of the Board made reference to the application for the Harrowby United Football Club (SKMP25) and conversations and dialogue that he had been having as they were still awaiting the funding. It was acknowledged that there were other factors which were having a bearing on the allocation of the funding, but work was being done to try and address these issues to allow the funding to be granted.

Further discussion followed in respect of the following applications with the Head of Economic Development and Inward Investment giving assurances in respect of the projects and answering Members questions.

SKMP15 – SKDC Shop Front
SKMP16 – National Trust (Belton House)
SK2166 – West Deeping Village Hall

SK-2196 – SKDC Biodiversity
SK-2205 – South Kesteven District Council Car Park Improvements
SKMP19 – Destination Lincolnshire
SKMP503 – Deepings Community Centre
E29 – Supporting Decarbonisation & Improving the Natural Environment

A question was asked about the figures shown on the pink papers with the new figures circulated which were different and it was stated that changes had been made since the pink papers had been published.

Further discussion on the funding followed and it was confirmed that all invoices had to be paid by the 31 March 2025, any underspend of the funding allocated would have to be paid back if had not been spent by this date. Assurances were given to the Board that Officers were working hard, chasing applicants for compliance with all the necessary criteria to ensure that funding was allocated and the works completed by 31 March 2025.

50. Main Programme Applications

SKMP42 – South Kesteven District Council – Brown Tourism Signs (A1)

Funding requested: £40,000

The project was for the installation of two Brown Tourist signs for Stamford along the A1, one on the north-bound and one on the south-bound. This was a one-off project and once installed would become the property of the relevant highway authority. It was noted that the project contributed to the Council's Corporate Plan and priorities. The main cost was due to the necessity to close the A1 whilst the signs were erected. Some Board Members felt that Stamford was already a tourist destination and that the signs were not required. It was confirmed that costs had to be paid in advance before the work was completed by the National Highways Agency. On being put to the vote it was proposed, seconded and agreed to **ENDORSE** the funding application.

51. Rural Fund Applications

RF-1028 – Clematis Cottages

Funding requested: £14,450

The funding application was a returning application. The project was for grant funding to deliver seed capital required to install all the additional infrastructure to enable a complimentary and fully integrated version of live streaming of wildlife in the grounds, similar to "Spring watch" at the B & B accommodation. It was acknowledged that this was a niche enterprise but on being put to the vote it was proposed, seconded and agreed to **REJECT** the application for funding.

RF-1033 – E-Badges Ltd
Funding requested: £15,000

The project was for an off-site manufacturing process that would upgrade the production of badge machine casting from gravity die to high-pressure injection moulding. The investment was required for tooling and to upgrade the IT system to help develop areas of the business, operations, sales, marketing and digital platforms. Members acknowledged the match funding and it was proposed, seconded and agreed to **ENDORSE** the funding application.

RF-1034 – Moto101 Ltd
Funding requested: £24,999

The funding requested was for the purchase of a renewable power source, solar panels. The company was working hard with electric off-road bikes which were currently running on a generator to charge them. A discussion on the project followed with comments being made about the type of building used. On being put to the vote the application for funding was **ENDORSED**.

52. South Kesteven Prosperity Fund Applications

SK-2218 – Stamford & District Indoor Bowls
Funding requested: £42,720

The funding requested was for the installation of solar panels to the roof of the Indoor Bowls Club. One of the Board Members spoke in support of the application as he was familiar with the location. It was noted that the building was leased from South Kesteven District Council and questions were asked about the suitability of the roof for the installation of solar panels. It was stated that the necessary surveys would have to be undertaken and the Council as landowner would have to give consent. It was proposed, seconded and agreed to **ENDORSE** the funding request subject to confirmation that the roof was structurally suitable to have solar panels installed and that consent had been received from South Kesteven District Council as the building owner, for the work to be carried out.

SK-2193 – Rutland and Stamford Sound Community Interest Company
Funding requested: £6,790

The funding request was for a project to establish a DAB community radio service covering Rutland and Stamford together with support for a related marketing campaign. One of the Board Members spoke about the application as he had prior involvement in a local radio station but did not vote on the application. Another Member also spoke about the application and stated that the radio would be based in Rutland with a 60/40 split with Stamford. On being put to the vote the application for funding was **REJECTED**.

SK-213 – Bourne Town Council
Funding requested: £24,000

At the last meeting of the Board the application had been deferred as it had been stated that the request for the refurbishment of the Christmas Lights and the purchase of some additional ex rental lights had already been undertaken. Following the meeting further information had been sought and it was confirmed that the refurbishment and purchase had not yet taken place. The Lights and connectors to buildings could be undertaken before the end of March 2025.

(11:48 the Chairman. Councillor Philip Knowles and Councillor Helen Crawford left the meeting at this point)

Vice-Chairman Councillor Virginia Moran in the Chair

The Board discussed the application, and it was stated that nothing in the application had changed from the last meeting other than it was clarified that the work had not yet been done. It was proposed, seconded and agreed to **ENDORSE** the funding requested.

(11:50 the Chairman and Councillor Crawford returned to the meeting)

53. Any other business that the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances decides is urgent

It was proposed that another meeting of the Board be scheduled for January 2025, and it was confirmed with Members that the next meeting would take place on **Monday 27 January 2025 at 11:00am.**

The Head of Economic Development and Inward Investment referred to three funding applications that had been endorsed and whether the Board would be in favour of extending the projects which had already been started. He briefly spoke about each project.

The Harlaxton Social Incubation project would like to extend their project to include a feasibility strategy to help support the social economy and also a leadership strand to develop a one to one management leadership project.

The other two projects were from Grantham College and Steadfast Training Ltd who provided integrated skills and employment service that tackled deep-seated barriers to work. Grantham College covered the north of the district and Steadfast Training Ltd covered the south. Members felt that they needed to see evidence of outputs that the projects were successful before they could make any decision to extend any of the three projects.

One of the Board Members referred to an application that had been submitted by the Harrowby United Football Club for Floodlights. He had been told that the application would come to this meeting, but it was not on the agenda. Due to

internal processes the intention was for the application to come to the next meeting of the Board.

Further discussion followed in respect of the application, and it was proposed, seconded and unanimously **AGREED** that a decision on the application be:

Delegated to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the UKSPF Board in consultation with the relevant Officers to make a decision on the application before the next meeting of the Board.

A brief discussion on the allocation of the UKSPF for the next year 2025/26 followed and it was stated that the funding would go to the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority and be distributed by them.

The Chairman hoped everyone had a good Christmas and closed the meeting at 12:08.